

Peatland and Environmental Management Expert

Call for tenders for a short-term consultancy (15 days in September-October 2019) for the Ramsar Advisory Mission to Kurgalsky Peninsula (Russian Federation)

For a **Ramsar Advisory Mission**, a tool to assist Contracting Parties with the implementation of the Convention on Wetlands (cf. Resolution XIII.11), visiting in late September 2019 St-Petersburg and the Ramsar Site 690 Kurgalsky Peninsula in the Russian Federation (Leningrad Oblast), the Ramsar Convention Secretariat seeks the services of an independent expert on peatland hydrology and environmental management for a short-term consultancy (up to 15 days), in agreement with the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment of the Russian Federation.

The chosen expert will actively participate in the Ramsar Advisory Mission to the Kurgalsky Peninsula and prepare the Mission report for the Ramsar Secretariat and the Russian Federal Ministry – according to the details outlined in the attached Terms of Reference for the Ramsar Advisory Mission (cf. ANNEX).

Independent and suitably qualified experts are invited to submit their tenders by stating and providing information (including evidence) on how they would fulfil the following selection requirements:

1. Be an independent expert in peatland hydrology and environmental management, demonstrated through concrete projects and their results (provide references).
2. Not have any conflict of interest concerning the management of the Kurgalsky Peninsula protected area. Provide details of any previous engagements in connection with the management of this protected area.
3. Be fluent in English with excellent writing skills, as a prerequisite to write up a comprehensive draft Mission report in an impartial and transparent way, rapidly after completion of the Mission. In addition, be able to read and understand documents in Russian and to communicate with local stakeholders in Russian would be an advantage.
4. Be available to participate in a five-day mission to St-Petersburg and the Kurgalsky Peninsula during the period of 17-30 September 2019 (exact dates to be fixed) and to write up the Mission report thereafter, delivering a first draft by the end of October 2019 to the Ramsar Secretariat, and being available for providing possibly needed amendments during the following months.
5. Provide summary information on the professional qualifications of the expert (CV) with a list of the most relevant experiences and references.
6. Provide a quotation of the daily rate for the consultancy, with the understanding that it should not exceed a maximum of 15 days. Economy flights to participate in the mission, from the home basis of the consultant (specify where?) to St-Petersburg will be reimbursed. Subsistence costs during the mission (local transport, accommodation and meals) will be covered by the Russian hosts. No other costs will be reimbursed.

Please submit a bid by uploading a single document file (do not send multiple documents) applications@ramsar.org by the deadline of 25 August 2019 (extended). Further information about this consultancy can be obtained from salathe@ramsar.org.

Terms of Reference

Ramsar Advisory Mission to Ramsar Site 690 Kurgalsky Peninsula Russian Federation

Introduction

In designating a wetland for the Ramsar List, a Contracting Party commits to maintain its ecological character. However, Ramsar Sites can face a variety of challenges, including developments in the agricultural, industrial, infrastructure, residential, tourism and recreation sectors; water management issues that affect water quality and quantity; invasive alien species and climate change.

The Ramsar Advisory Mission (RAM) is a technical assistance mechanism through which a Contracting Party may request expert advice in the assessment of potential threats to the ecological character of the Ramsar Site, and associated wetland issues. The mechanism typically involves a site visit by a team of experts, coordinated by the Ramsar Convention Secretariat, who assess the problems, discuss them with stakeholders and prepare a report, including recommendations. Formal guidance on the RAM process is provided in [Resolution XIII.11](#) on *Ramsar Advisory Missions* and with specific [Operational Guidance](#) for Ramsar Advisory Missions. This mechanism was never applied in the Russian Federation until present.

Construction of a gas pipeline across the Kurgalsky Peninsula

On 3 July 2017, the environmental organisations Coalition Clean Baltic, WWF Russia and Greenpeace Russia contacted the Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention (copied to the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation) with a complaint about the violation of the Ramsar Convention by the planned construction of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline across the *Kurgalsky Peninsula* Ramsar Site, a Regional State Nature Reserve (*Zakaznik*) in the Leningrad Oblast and Baltic Marine Protected Area of the HELCOM network.

On 5 July 2017, the Ramsar Secretariat (together with IUCN) had a meeting with the pipeline constructor *Nord Stream 2 AG* at their head office in Zug (Switzerland) and obtained information on the reasons for choosing the Narva Bay route for the pipeline landfall in Russia and on the ongoing environmental impact assessment and consultation process (related i.a. to the Espoo Convention). A further information meeting took place at the Ramsar Secretariat/IUCN headquarters (15 December 2017), followed by two biodiversity round tables with a wider audience in St. Petersburg (24 January 2018) and in Geneva (6 February 2018), followed up by correspondence between the Ramsar Secretariat and the Russian Ramsar Administrative Authority (AA), i.e. the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation.

As a result of these exchanges, the AA invited the Ramsar Secretariat (17 October 2018) to organise a RAM with a visit of the pipeline construction site towards the end of 2019. The present proposal is based on practical considerations evoked between the pipeline constructor and the Ramsar Secretariat during a meeting on 11 February 2019.

The gas pipeline is constructed across the southern part of the Kurgalsky Peninsula Ramsar Site over a distance of 6.2 km, of which approximately 3.7 km are onshore and 2.5 km offshore, crossing shallow waters and the sandy beach of the Narva Bay (Baltic Sea), and onshore a coastal swamp forest (1 km), a forested relict dune (0.5 km), and a marginal part of the hydrological dome of the extensive *Kader* bog (2.2 km).

The ecological character of Ramsar Site 690: Kurgalsky Peninsula

The Ramsar Site (65,000 ha) covers the shallow coastal waters of the Gulf of Finland with numerous islets around the Kurgalsky Peninsula and the peninsula itself southwards to the Estonian border. The terrestrial part is covered with mires and bogs, extensive pine forests and coastal dunes. Habitats include also patches of broad-leaved and mixed forests, coastal meadows and marshes with alder and oak, peat moss (*Sphagnum*) fens and bogs, floodplains, dry meadows, reed beds, rocky and sandy coastal shores. The Site exhibits a high species diversity of flora and fauna, supporting numerous species of regionally or globally threatened plants, mammals, birds, amphibians and reptiles. The coastal wetlands support large migrating and breeding populations of numerous species of waterbirds. The human population is scattered across a few small settlements inside the protected area and makes a living from the fisheries or seafood industry. Agricultural lands cover less than 10% of the Ramsar Site close to the southern border. This summary description is based on the most recent Ramsar Information Sheet – dating from 1997 – that is currently being updated by the AA. It should be noted that parts of the Ramsar Site have been impacted by drainage channels and through forest fires.

Issues to be addressed by the RAM team

The mission team has to obtain background and first-hand on-the-spot information to evaluate the issues listed below and to assess if and how they affect the ecological character of the Ramsar Site, how this could be avoided or mitigated *ex post*?

The RAM team will focus prominently on these issues:

1. Assess possible effects of the trench box pipeline construction method across the onshore part (sandy beach, swamp forest, relict dune, peat bog dome) and the offshore pipeline laying in the shallow waters, notably regarding possible habitat alterations, disturbance to habitats and species, spread of invasive species, alteration of bog hydrology and related possible ecological changes.
2. Review and evaluate the environmental monitoring programme for the operational phase of the pipeline, developed and implemented by the constructor.
3. Evaluate the measures proposed by the pipeline constructor as part of its Biodiversity Action Plan to support the operations, survey and management of the Kurgalsky Regional State Nature Reserve, including measures to manage tourist and recreational access, increase public awareness on environmental concerns and natural values, and support local education programmes.
4. Make specific recommendations regarding the points listed above, as well as the needs and ways how to improve the scientific knowledge of the Kurgalsky Peninsula and to support and increase together with regional authorities (Committee for Natural Resources of Leningrad Region and

Directorate of Specially Protected Natural Areas of Leningrad Region) local capacities and know-how for sustainable reserve management.

Composition of the RAM Team

A representative of the **Ramsar Secretariat** leads and coordinates the RAM Team (Tobias Salathe). He assures that rules, decisions and resolutions adopted by the Convention are applied. The Secretariat RAM team leader is independent from the AA or any other stakeholder position. The RAM Team includes a member of the national Ramsar **Administrative Authority**.

The RAM Team can also include additional Russian experts, or experts from neighbouring countries, proposed by the AA and/or the regional administration and a representative of the academic and scientific community (names will be included by the AA prior to the Mission).

The RAM Team includes an **independent** (not representing any interested party) **expert on peatland hydrology and environmental management** as outlined in the issues to be addressed above. The independent expert will elaborate, in consultation with the other Team members, recommendations based on her/his assessment, independent of possible positions of the AA or any other stakeholder. An important function of the RAM Team is to provide an external and international perspective on the local and national issues at stake.

The independent expert will be hired specifically for the RAM by the Ramsar Secretariat (through a public announcement). S/he is fluent in English to write up the draft mission report in English. Understanding Russian will help her/him to evaluate background documents and communicate on-site with local stakeholders. The Secretariat will hire this expert in agreement with the AA, for the period needed to prepare the mission, executing the mission and to write up the mission report (total of 10-15 working days).

The expert will write the draft mission report in an independent and transparent way. The RAM Team members will agree on the final report to be prepared by the Ramsar Secretariat and accepted by the AA. The RAM Team provides objective advice and recommendations, based on its comprehensive, objective and impartial assessment of the situation and the issues at stake, and is perceived to do so by stakeholders and the wider public. Advice and Recommendations provided in the RAM report will support well-informed processes to prepare the best possible decisions by the AA or by any other part of the government of the Russian Federation and its subjects.

Stakeholders to be met by the RAM Team

The RAM Team will meet during its on-site visit (in St-Petersburg, Kingisepp City, inside the Kurgalsky Zakaznik, on the pipeline construction site) representatives of the following stakeholder organisations. They will be invited to meet with the RAM Team by the Russian authorities, who will also help with Russian-English interpretation:

- representatives of the pipeline constructor Nord Stream 2 AG (and possibly also of the constructor of the terrestrial part of the pipeline leading to Kurgalsky Peninsula, Gazprom Ltd),
- representatives of the Kingisepp District and Kuzemkinskoye rural settlement administrations, whose territory covers the Zakaznik and the adjoining lands,

- representatives of the Committee for Natural Resources of Leningrad Region and Directorate of Specially Protected Natural Areas of Leningrad Region and Kingisepp District Forestry which are in charge of the Zakaznik management, environmental monitoring and education,
- representatives of people living inside the Zakaznik or undertaking regular (economic or recreational) activities inside the protected area,
- representatives of the environmental NGOs having submitted an initial complaint (Coalition Clean Baltic, WWF and Greenpeace Russia).

Programme, timetable and logistics of the RAM

The mission will take place during the second half of September 2019 (between 17 and 30 September). This is a tentative programme proposal:

Day 1: - travel of RAM Team members coming from Moscow and abroad to St-Petersburg

Day 2: - initial meeting of the RAM Team with the regional authorities (Committee for Natural Resources of Leningrad Region and Directorate of Specially Protected Natural Areas of Leningrad Region) in St-Petersburg

- travel from St-Petersburg to Kurgalsky Zakaznik
- overnight in Dubki hotel close to Kurgalsky Zakaznik

Day 3: - on-site visit of the pipeline construction site

- meeting with stakeholders, including the constructor, Kingisepp District and Kuzemkinskoye rural settlement administrations, Kingisepp Forestry
- overnight in Dubki hotel

Day 4: - extended visit of Kurgalsky Zakaznik (including its visitor and education facilities, existing or planned)

- overnight in Dubki hotel

Day 5: - debriefing of the RAM Team with the regional authorities

- return travel to St-Petersburg (airport)
- return travel of the RAM team to Moscow or further

The AA will organise the **logistics** for the RAM (accommodation, subsistence and land travel for the RAM Team, meetings with authorities and stakeholders on-site and in St-Petersburg, etc.), likely with the help and support by the regional and local authorities and the constructor company.

The AA will cover the **costs** of the RAM, including the costs of hiring the RAM Team expert, possibly with contributions from the regional and local authorities (in kind) and with support of the pipeline constructor Nord Stream 2 AG.

Follow-up of the Mission

The process to write up the mission report will be agreed by the RAM Team during its debriefing with the authorities at the end of the mission. The expert hired for the RAM will write up a draft mission report within one month after the mission. This draft report will then be edited by the

Ramsar Secretariat and submitted to the AA for approval within three months. At this stage, some issues may need still to be clarified, possibly with additional inputs by stakeholders consulted during the RAM? However, this process of finalizing the RAM report between the AA and the Ramsar Secretariat should not take more than three additional months, i.e. the final RAM report will be published on the Convention's website by the end of March 2020 the very latest.

The **RAM report** will be written in English (with an Executive Summary and its Recommendations translated into Russian by the AA) and will be structured according to this standard format:

- **Executive Summary**, providing a brief overview of the issues addressed and the ecological character of the Ramsar Site concerned, date and duration of the RAM, composition of the RAM team, principal conclusions and recommendations of the RAM, and a statement how they should be followed-up – *[text can be copied from these ToR, the AA will translate the Executive Summary into Russian]*;
- **Background** to the Mission, with a brief summary of consultations that resulted in the initiation of the RAM; and a
- **Brief description of the wetland site**, including a location and site map and links to the Ramsar Information Sheet, but excluding technical descriptions with no direct relevance to the specific issues being addressed by the RAM – *[text from these ToR can be used]*;
- **Summary of the current situation** as assessed by the RAM team, focusing on findings and conclusions that apply to the core issues of the Mission;
- Stand-alone list of all **Recommendations** – *[to be translated into Russian by the AA]*;
- **Annexes** covering the – *[based on the text of these ToR]*:
 - o Terms of Reference for the RAM
 - o Composition of the RAM team
 - o Programme of the on-site Mission
 - o List of stakeholders consulted and other contributors
 - o Acknowledgment of the hosts, contributors and donors.

The RAM report should be written as short as possible (but as long as necessary). Recommendations listed in the RAM report should be linked to the findings and conclusions of the Mission Team, and these in turn need to be linked to the issues to be addressed, listed above. It may be helpful to distinguish between short-term, medium-term and long-term actions to be undertaken. Each Recommendation should be tested if it clearly identifies the action to be taken, who has to take it, by when, subject to which enabling conditions, and with which measureable indicators of implementation and success? Narrative text on these points may be supported by a simple table of suggested actions, time frames, stakeholder groups, practical indicators, etc.

As part of the **regular reporting process** to Standing Committee and the COP providing an *annual* update on the status of Ramsar Sites, the Ramsar Secretariat will ask the AA to provide a short update on progress with implementation of the Recommendations made by the RAM at annual intervals. Through this reporting process, the Kurgalsky Peninsula Ramsar Site will remain in the list of sites with an “open Article 3.2 file” after the RAM until the AA reports to the Secretariat that the Recommendations listed by the RAM have been satisfactorily implemented.